



January 28, 2023

An Open Letter to the Antioch Community,

Just as we have made so much progress to mend relations with our community after the senseless killing of George Floyd, we are now impacted yet again by the actions of now former police officers thousands of miles away. I share in shock and disgust with our community over the inhumane killing of Tyre Nichols in Memphis Tennessee. What I saw in the video released yesterday is not only contrary to the mission of law enforcement officers to preserve life but goes against basic human values.

The Antioch Police Department has comprehensive best practice policies and training on use of force, duty to intervene, bias-based policing, and de-escalation. Our use of force policy requires all members to recognize and respect the value of human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Our officers are required to intervene when witnessing any level of force that is clearly beyond what is necessary. Our policies are available for public viewing on the following website: <https://www.antiochca.gov/police/sb-978-policy-manual-training-materials>

As we have seen in Memphis, even the best policies cannot prevent senseless inhumane actions committed by those who wear the badge. It is for this reason we employ strict hiring standards, thorough background checks, and psychological examinations of individuals who apply to be within our ranks. Since I became Chief, we have been working to improve our policies, procedures, and training to ensure our officers are at the forefront of humane, ethical, best practice policing. In an effort to be held accountable to these goals, we are developing a monitoring system to track officer behaviors and will soon roll out a use of force transparency dashboard to provide statistics on officer-community interactions. Our work will not rest there, as we are constantly looking for innovative ways to better serve our community with the utmost respect for the rights of others.

We will always strive to use these senseless tragedies as teachable moments to make us better and improve the way we serve our community. On behalf of the men and women of the Antioch Police Department, we *strongly* condemn the actions of the former Memphis Police Officers which led to the death of Tyre Nichols. We share in grief with his family, pray for justice, and humbly ask for peace.

Dr. Steven A. Ford
Chief of Police

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